



Summary of the *AYSO-Relevant* Changes to the 2025-2026 Laws of the Game (LOTG)



Law 8 (Dropped Ball)

- The Law: “If, when play was stopped, *the ball was **outside** the penalty area*, the referee drops it for one player of the team that has *or would have gained possession if this can be determined by the referee*; otherwise, it is dropped for one player of the team that last touched it.”
 - There are times when the ball would clearly have gone to an opponent of the team that last touched the ball. In such instances, it is fairer for the ball to be dropped for the team that would have gained possession.
- The Law: “If, when play was stopped, *the ball was **inside** the penalty area*, the referee drops it for the defending team goalkeeper in their penalty area.”
 - It doesn’t matter whether the offensive team was in possession of the ball or would have been in possession of the ball, it is always dropped to the defending team’s goalkeeper.

Law 9 (The Ball in and out of Play)

- The Law: “If, without intending to interfere with play unfairly, a team official [or] substitute . . . touches the ball while it is still in play but when it is clearly leaving the field of play, this is penalized with an indirect free kick (IFK); there is no sanction.”
 - There are times with a coach or substitute touches the ball as it is going out of play with the intention of helping the game restart quickly or preventing the ball from rolling far off the field. In such cases, an indirect free kick will be awarded (without a sanction).

Law 12 (Fouls and Misconduct)

- The Law: “A corner kick is awarded if a goalkeeper, inside their penalty area, controls the ball with their hand(s)/arm(s) for more than *eight seconds* before releasing it. . . . The referee will decide when the goalkeeper has control of the ball and the eight seconds begin and will visually count down the last five seconds with a raised hand.”

Guidelines for referees:

- ‘silently’ count **8 - 7 - 6**
- raise open hand and count **5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 - 0** with the fingers and arm movement
- verbally count **5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 - 0** to help goalkeeper and team-mates
- start counting if goalkeeper is on the ground but no one around them
- only start counting when goalkeeper has clear possession



- In determining when the 8 seconds begin, the Referee may take into account the age/skill level of the goalkeeper, as well as other circumstances affecting the ability to release the ball (e.g., on the ground, but prevented by opponents from getting up).
- The hand signal and verbal countdown are provided to *help* the goalkeeper avoid a violation.
- When a corner kick is awarded, there is no disciplinary action against the goalkeeper, unless the goalkeeper repeatedly commits the offence, in which case, a Caution will be issued.